

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL.

THE CONTINGENT FUND.

WASHINGTON, March 26.—The Senate this evening says: The raid of senators on the contingent fund, by means of resolutions ordering various inquiries and expeditions for the coming recess, is of no small proportions. The question is agitating the Republican majority of the Senate, and in the caucus some pretty strong language has been used to condemn the "juncturing resolution" through which resolutions providing for recess trips, with clerks, stenographers, etc., have gone beyond any previous session. One by one these resolutions were passed until the Senate was confronted with the fact that it would have to provide a very large contingent fund to meet the demand upon it. As each day brought one or more new propositions of this character, some of the Republican senators began to think seriously that it was high time to put a stop to the thing. Finally, when the dozen committees had been authorized to inquire into something, or compile something during recess, some of them with authority to travel, and several additional propositions of a similar nature were presented, some of the senators of the majority could stand it no longer. They decided to boldly oppose such proceedings, and Mr. Sherman submitted his resolution to rescind authority granted to various committees for recess work. In the caucus some of the senators who have procured the passage of resolutions for recess committee-work defended their action on the ground that such work is necessary. The senators who support the Sherman resolution take the ground that they do not object to useful or necessary work, but that their purpose is to prevent waste of money in idle junketings, as such waste would bring reproach upon the majority.

Up to the present the following committees have been granted power to meet during the recess and to employ clerks, stenographers, and other assistants: Agriculture and Forestry, Education and Labor, Public Buildings and Grounds, Mississippi River, Naval Affairs, Indian Affairs, Transportation Routes to the Seaboard, Select Committee on Interstate Commerce, Rules, Privileges and Elections, on Steel-Producing Works, and the Printing Committee. This is a list of twelve, but that number it can be stated that it is usual for the Printing Committee to meet during the recess of Congress to open bids, etc., and such meetings do not entail any additional cost to the Government. The Committee on Rules also have some work on hand which it is conceded must be done by the next meeting of Congress. There is to be a new revision of the rules, etc., and another edition of the Digest is to be printed. Hence, that is to be exempted from the operations of the Sherman repeal. Many of the committees named are authorized to travel about the country in pursuit of information. Of this class are the Committees on Indian Affairs, Naval Affairs, Transportation Routes, Interstate Commerce, Education and Labor, while the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry is to make a tour through the Adirondacks. Besides the committees which have already received authority to do recess work resolutions are pending to authorize a special committee to visit Alaska, to empower the Committee on Coast Defenses to visit different points and investigate the subject of protection of our coasts, to authorize the Committee on Fisheries to look into the fisheries, and to direct the Committee on Claims to compile and collect information. Should the pending resolutions be adopted, it is increasing the list of committees having authority to compile or investigate and travel to fifteen (not counting the Printing Committee). It can easily be seen that the contingent fund would have to be very large to cover the expenses incurred. The aggregate expense of all the committees would not probably fall below \$100,000, as the trip to Alaska would necessarily be a costly one.

THE PARSONS CASE UP.

Argument begun on it in the United States Supreme Court yesterday.

WASHINGTON, March 26.—In the United States Supreme Court to-day argument in the case of The Auditor of Virginia vs. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, one of the coupon-tax cases, was concluded and argument was begun in another of the debt cases—that of The Auditor of Virginia vs. Edwin Parsons.

This latter case is an appeal from the United States Circuit Court for the Eastern district of Virginia. The question is as to whether this suit is or is not against the State itself, though nominally directed against one of the State's officers.

The appellants contend that it is a suit against the State, and that consequently this court has no jurisdiction. Attorney-General Blair, of Virginia, made the argument on behalf of the appellant.

The appellee brought suit in the Circuit Court to obtain an order to restrain the Auditor of the State from refusing to receive coupons of the bonds issued under the funding act of 1871 in payment of license-taxes, and the court granted the order; whereupon the defendants in that suit appealed to this court. The principal question of law involved in this case is the same as in the other coupon cases.

Mr. Richard L. Maury and Mr. Wager Swaine made arguments for the appellee.

Extra Session of the Senate.

(By telegraph to the Dispatch.)

WASHINGTON, March 26.—Upon motion of Senator Miller, of California, the Senate (at 12:05) went into executive session.

After some further discussion of the Well and La Abra treaties they were postponed until the next session. At 3:45 the doors were reopened.

Senator Sherman's resolution providing that a committee of two senators shall be appointed to wait upon the President and inform him that if he has no further communication to make the Senate is ready to adjourn was adopted, and Senators Sherman and Beck were appointed such committee.

Mr. Allison offered a resolution providing that the resolution adopted July 5, 1884, authorizing the Sergeant-at-Arms to rent suitable rooms for the use of Senate committees outside the Capitol be rescinded, was laid over under objection.

Mr. Allison offered a resolution providing that a committee of seven senators be appointed, with leave to sit during the recess of the Senate, to carefully examine and report by bill or otherwise what reductions should be made in the number of and compensation of the employees of the Senate, and also if any further provision should be made to control and regulate the con-

tingent fund of the Senate. Laid over under objection.

At 3:50 P. M. the Senate adjourned.

Republican Memorial Congress.

(By telegraph to the Dispatch.)

WASHINGTON, March 26.—The Republican senators held another caucus upon Mr. Sherman's resolution relating to vacation clerkships this morning, but there were many absentees, and the matter was not brought to a vote.

Speaking of to-day's caucus of Republican senators, the Star says: The caucus virtually decided to begin a thorough system of retrenchment. Another meeting will be held Saturday, when steps looking to a reduction of the number of officers and employees will be taken. The Butler building is to be surrendered to the House at the first year, and some of the present committees are to be abolished. All this cannot be accomplished before next winter, but so much as can be done in the way of retrenchment will be carried out at once, and committees will be appointed to make other reductions. It has been found that over 300 persons are on the Senate rolls, drawing annually in the aggregate about \$350,000.

Presidential Nominations.

(By telegraph to the Dispatch.)

WASHINGTON, March 26.—The President sent the following nominations to the Senate to-day: Thomas C. Crenshaw, Jr., to be collector of internal-revenue, district of Georgia; Claiborne Robinson, to be postmaster at Yazoo City, Miss.

Confirmations.

(By telegraph to the Dispatch.)

WASHINGTON, March 26.—The Senate in executive session to-day confirmed the following nominations: Daniel McCallville, of Iowa, to be Auditor of the Treasury for the Post-Office Department; John W. Saville, to be passed assistant engineer of the navy on the retired list.

Washington Items.

(By telegraph to the Dispatch.)

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 26.—The Secretary of the Treasury has prepared a circular-letter to be sent to the collectors of customs requesting information as to the practicability of reducing the expense of collecting the revenue from customs by curtailing the present force of clerks and other employees.

Mr. Miller, Commissioner of Internal Revenue, has recommended several changes in several collection districts, and it is expected that he will nominate a number of collectors of internal revenue to-morrow or next day.

The nomination to to-day's list which excited the most interest was that for postmaster at Indianapolis, Ind. A rather active contest as to the right to name the man for this place has been going on for some time between Representative-elect Bynum and Vice-President Hendricks. The former, supported, it is said, by Senator Morton, urged the claims of Frank Greelman, while the latter insisted upon the nomination of his friend, Aquila Jones. Mr. Hendricks was finally successful.

The commission appointed to make an examination of the Treasury Department with special reference to the simplification and improvement of the methods of doing business and to the reduction and rearrangement of officers and clerical force will meet at the department to-morrow morning to decide on a general plan of procedure. It is not believed that the commission can complete the duty assigned it in less than ten or twelve weeks' time.

Rev. H. R. Naylor, of the Methodist denomination; Rev. W. A. Bartlett, of the Presbyterian, and Rev. W. A. Leonard, of the Episcopal, all ministers of this city, called upon the President to-day and presented to him a memorial urging him to meet at St. Louis, and to look upon this as a public misfortune. To add to the horrors of last night it was ascertained this morning that George J. Roth, a member of the fire department, who was last seen on St. Louis church, had lost his life, his charred remains being found this morning in the debris of the tower. He leaves a widow and five children. It has been ascertained that the water in the building had been turned off in the basement to prevent the building would probably have been saved. The losses are placed as follows: Music Hall, \$200,000; Orpheus Society, \$5,000; Charles F. Haug's restaurant, \$1,300; German Young Men's Association library, \$10,000; Meech Brothers, \$6,000; McCull Opera Company, \$10,000; Frankenstein, janitor, \$3,000; St. Louis church-building, \$100,000—insurance, \$19,000; total, \$354,000. Insurance on Music Hall and library, \$53,375; on St. Louis church-building, \$23,000; on contents of the church, \$4,000; on Orpheus Society property, \$2,000; other insurance, \$3,000. The air is full of rumors of missing people, and possibly, as a good many were viewing the fire from the sidewalk in front of Music Hall at the time the front wall fell, other bodies may still be in the ruins. It is, however, more than probable that all escaped, as the walls swayed for some time before falling. The Building Committee have called a meeting to talk over a project of rebuilding, and it is not improbable that a public fund for this purpose will be started.

A FRIGHTFUL CASUALTY.

The failure to rescue Joseph Green from the cupola of the St. Louis church while it was burning last night was due to the fact that the firemen had a ladder of sufficient length to reach him. The man was some hundred feet from the ground. The longest extension-ladder was at once seized by the firemen, placed in position and run up about seventy feet from the earth. It was opposed by a signal-fire fastened to the cupola. The foot of the ladder was instantly shifted to its full height, but it proved too short to reach the man in peril. There was no network of telegraph wires, as at first reported, preventing the use of the ladders. No lines pass the church.

Returns of Railroad Laborers.

(By telegraph to the Dispatch.)

NEW ORLEANS, March 26.—The United States marshal at New Orleans arrived last evening from Livingston and Port Barre, Central America. She had been ordered to these points to bring home a number of sick and destitute railroad laborers. She took on board seventy-eight men, all suffering; more or less from malarial fever. One of the number, Henry Bauer, of New York, died on the passage. When the vessel arrived here twenty-one of the men who were still under medical treatment were sent to the hospital.

ANGLO-RUSSO DIFFICULTY.

Active Preparations for War in London—Reserve and Militia Called Out.

(By cable to the Dispatch.)

CONSTANTINOPLE, March 26.—In political circles here it is thought that in the event of war between Russia and England the fighting will not be confined to the Afghan frontier, but will extend to the Black sea. It is rumored that Great Britain has already sounded the Porte in regard to obtaining permission to pass the Dardanelles in case of war. The prolonged stay of Lord Russell in London, and the Turkish Embassy's statement this morning on their departure for Tarnia as General McNeill's zereba. The start was made at 7 o'clock. The zereba was reached with the loss of but three men, who were wounded in a fight on the way. A force of Arabs rushed on the troops. The latter at once formed a square. The Arabs recklessly charged upon this with such impetuosity that they got within twenty yards of it. They were repulsed with a loss of one hundred killed. Skirmishes of troops are engaged in clearing bushes of Arabs along the road to Tarnia. The telegraph wires between Suakin and the advanced British position have been cut by the enemy, but communications are kept up by means of the heliograph and sun-telegraph, which will operate successfully at a distance of about sixty miles.

As soon as the British evacuated Habsheh the rebels took possession of the place and fired on the retreating British. The Arabs have refrained from further attacks.

Suakin, March 26.—The occupation of Habsheh is now admitted to have been a mistake. It has served no useful purpose. Convoys are being severely on the march, many of whom are sick. General Dugan on Sunday ordered his troops to advance on Suakin after the slaughter of the British. It is now stated that it will be impossible to attack Tarnia on Friday owing to the difficulty of obtaining a supply of water.

Foreign Money Market.

(By cable to the Dispatch.)

LONDON, March 26.—After official hours to-day the foreign finance market, owing to the calling out of the reserves and the militia. Consols and Russian, Turkish, and Egyptian securities were the principal sufferers by the decline. The Paris bourse was flat. Renten closed at 187 1/2, while for the day the owing to the Tonnage defeat.

The Queen had sent a message to the House of Commons calling out the British reserves and British militia for permanent service.

LONDON, March 26.—In accordance with the Queen's message the War Office has called out the army reserves and militia.

The calling out of the reserves and militia has increased the excitement over the Anglo-Russian difficulty, especially in military circles. Orders for thousands of Martini-Henry rifles and revolvers have been sent to Birmingham. The arms are to be shipped to Bombay as rapidly as completed. The factories at Birmingham are working night and day. The Queen's message calling out the reserves and militia is as follows:

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